

What is claimed is:

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the pictorial representation includes a
2 diagram of at least one enclosure within which the plurality of hardware components
3 is disposed, the diagram further depicting a physical location of each of the plurality
4 of hardware components in the enclosure.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the first diagram depicts a first view of the
2 enclosure taken from a first viewpoint, and wherein the pictorial representation further
3 includes a second diagram depicting a second view of the enclosure taken from a
4 second viewpoint.

1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein at least one of the plurality of hardware
2 components comprises an unused interface component configured to physically
3 interconnect with another hardware component, the method further comprising
4 managing the unused interface component through user input directed to the pictorial
5 representation.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of hardware
2 components is associated with at least one attribute, the method further comprising:
3 (a) comparing attributes associated with the plurality of hardware
4 components against a filter criterion; and

5 (b) selecting those hardware components associated with attributes
6 that match the filter criterion.

1 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising generating the filter criterion
2 responsive to user input.

1 7. The method of claim 5, further comprising selecting the filter criterion
2 from a plurality of predetermined filter criteria, each of the plurality of predetermined
3 filter criteria associated with a predetermined view among a plurality of views.

1 8. The method of claim 5, wherein each hardware component is associated
2 with a hardware type, and wherein the filter criterion identifies a selected hardware
3 type, wherein selecting those hardware components includes selecting those hardware
4 components associated with the selected hardware type.

1 9. The method of claim 5, further comprising updating the indication of the
2 selected status for at least one of the multiple hardware components responsive to
3 selection of those hardware components associated with attributes that match the filter
4 criterion.

1 10. The method of claim 5, wherein each of the plurality of hardware
2 components is associated with at least one of a plurality of diagrams, each of which
3 depicting a physical location of at least one of the plurality of hardware components,
4 the method further comprising displaying within the pictorial representation only
5 those diagrams from the plurality of diagrams that depict the physical location of at
6 least one hardware component having a selected status.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising visually highlighting those
2 portions of the pictorial representation that depict the physical configurations of the
3 multiple hardware components that have a selected status.

1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising updating the status of a first
2 hardware component among the plurality of hardware components to one of a selected
3 and an unselected status responsive to user input directed to that portion of the
4 pictorial representation that depicts the physical configuration of the first hardware
5 component.

13 13. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing a management
2 operation on each of the multiple hardware components that have a selected status
3 responsive to user input.

14 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the multiple hardware components are
2 physically located in a plurality of computers, wherein performing the management
3 operation includes performing the management operation in each of the plurality of
4 computers.

15 15. The method of claim 14, wherein at least two of the plurality of computers
2 utilize different types of computer platforms.

16 16. The method of claim 1, further comprising retrieving a list of available
2 management operations associated with a first hardware component among the
3 plurality of hardware components in response to user input directed to that portion of
4 the pictorial representation that depicts the physical configuration of the first hardware
5 component.

17 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the user input includes user input to
2 open a context sensitive menu, the method further comprising:

3 (a) displaying the list of available management operations within a
4 context sensitive menu; and

5 (b) initiating one of the available management operations on the first
6 hardware component responsive to user input directed to the context sensitive
7 menu.

1 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising retrieving status information
2 associated with a first hardware component among the plurality of hardware
3 components in response to user input directed to that portion of the pictorial
4 representation that depicts the physical configuration of the first hardware component.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the user input includes locating a user-
2 manipulated pointer over that portion of the pictorial representation that depicts the
3 physical configuration of the first hardware component, the method further
4 comprising displaying the retrieved status information within a pop-up window
5 disposed proximate that portion of the pictorial representation that depicts the
6 physical configuration of the first hardware component.

1 20. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying the pictorial representation
2 and indicating the selected status are performed on a first computer, and wherein each
3 of the plurality of hardware components is physically located in the first computer.

1 21. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying the pictorial representation
2 and indicating the selected status are performed on a first computer, and wherein at
3 least a portion of the plurality of hardware components are physically located in a
4 second computer in communication with the first computer.

1 22. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of hardware
2 components is disposed in a computer selected from the group consisting of a single-
3 user computer, a multi-user computer, a clustered computer, a multi-unit computer,
4 and combinations thereof.

1 23. An apparatus, comprising:

2 (a) a memory; and

3 (b) a program resident in the memory and configured to display a
4 pictorial representation on a computer display, the pictorial representation
5 associated with a plurality of hardware components and representing a
6 physical configuration of each of the plurality of hardware components, the
7 program further configured to indicate a selected status for multiple hardware
8 components from the plurality of hardware components within the pictorial
9 representation associated with the plurality of hardware components.

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1 24. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the pictorial representation includes a
2 diagram of at least one enclosure within which the plurality of hardware components
3 is disposed, the diagram further depicting a physical location of each of the plurality
4 of hardware components in the enclosure.

1 25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the first diagram depicts a first view
2 of the enclosure taken from a first viewpoint, and wherein the pictorial representation
3 further includes a second diagram depicting a second view of the enclosure taken
4 from a second viewpoint.

1 26. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein at least one of the plurality of
2 hardware components comprises an unused interface component configured to
3 physically interconnect with another hardware component, wherein the program is
4 further configured to manage the unused interface component through user input
5 directed to the pictorial representation.

1 27. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein each of the plurality of hardware
2 components is associated with at least one attribute, and wherein the program is
3 further configured to compare attributes associated with the plurality of hardware
4 components against a filter criterion, and select those hardware components
5 associated with attributes that match the filter criterion.

1 28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the program is further configured to
2 generate the filter criterion responsive to user input.

1 29. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the program is further configured to
2 select the filter criterion from a plurality of predetermined filter criteria, each of the
3 plurality of predetermined filter criteria associated with a predetermined view among
4 a plurality of views.

1 30. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein each of the plurality of hardware
2 components is associated with at least one of a plurality of diagrams, each of which
3 depicting a physical location of at least one of the plurality of hardware components,
4 wherein the program is further configured to display within the pictorial
5 representation only those diagrams from the plurality of diagrams that depict the
6 physical location of at least one hardware component having a selected status.

1 31. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the program is further configured to
2 visually highlight those portions of the pictorial representation that depict the physical
3 configurations of the multiple hardware components that have a selected status.

1 32. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the program is further configured to
2 update the status of a first hardware component among the plurality of hardware
3 components to one of a selected and an unselected status responsive to user input
4 directed to that portion of the pictorial representation that depicts the physical
5 configuration of the first hardware component.

1 33. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the program is further configured to
2 perform a management operation on each of the multiple hardware components that
3 have a selected status responsive to user input.

1 34. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the multiple hardware components are
2 physically located in a plurality of computers, wherein the program is further
3 configured to perform the management operation by performing the management
4 operation in each of the plurality of computers.

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1 35. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the program is further configured to
2 retrieve a list of available management operations associated with a first hardware
3 component among the plurality of hardware components in response to user input
4 directed to that portion of the pictorial representation that depicts the physical
5 configuration of the first hardware component.

1 36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the user input includes user input to
2 open a context sensitive menu, wherein the program is further configured to display
3 the list of available management operations within a context sensitive menu, and
4 initiate one of the available management operations on the first hardware component
5 responsive to user input directed to the context sensitive menu.

1 37. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the program is further configured to
2 retrieve status information associated with a first hardware component among the
3 plurality of hardware components in response to user input directed to that portion of
4 the pictorial representation that depicts the physical configuration of the first hardware
5 component.

1 38. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the program is resident on the same
2 computer as the plurality of hardware components.

1 39. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein at least one of the plurality of
2 hardware components is physically located on a different computer from that within
3 which the program is resident.

1 40. A program product, comprising:

2 (a) a program configured to display a pictorial representation on a
3 computer display, the pictorial representation associated with a plurality of
4 hardware components and representing a physical configuration of each of the
5 plurality of hardware components, the program further configured to indicate a
6 selected status for multiple hardware components from the plurality of
7 hardware components within the pictorial representation associated with the
8 plurality of hardware components; and

9 (b) a signal bearing medium bearing the program.

1 41. The program product of claim 40, wherein the signal bearing medium
2 includes at least one of a recordable medium and a transmission medium.

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42. A method of managing computer hardware components, the method comprising:

- 3 (a) accessing a plurality of computers to identify a plurality of hardware components resident in the plurality of computers;
- 4 (b) dynamically generating a pictorial representation on a computer display, the pictorial representation associated with the plurality of computers and representing a physical configuration of each of the plurality of hardware components within the plurality of computers; and
- 5 (b) performing at least one management operation on a first hardware component among the plurality of hardware components in response to user input directed to that portion of the pictorial representation that represents the physical configuration of the first hardware component.

1 43. The method of claim 42, wherein each of the plurality of hardware components is associated with at least one attribute, and wherein each of the plurality of hardware components is associated with at least one of a plurality of diagrams, the method further comprising:

- 5 (a) comparing attributes associated with the plurality of hardware components against a filter criterion; and
- 6 (b) selecting those hardware components associated with attributes that match the filter criterion;

7 wherein dynamically generating the pictorial representation includes displaying 8 within the pictorial representation only those diagrams associated with the selected 9 hardware components.